

The Educational Opportunity Centers program offers free Federal Financial Aid and college admissions assistance to Fort Bragg community

FORT BRAGG, N.C. - Understanding college admissions and federal financial aid can each take a degree in their own right. Members of the Fort Bragg community have access to the Educational Opportunity Centers program, which is designed to promote financial literacy and support people as they apply for both college and federal financial aid. The EOC program, which is free, serves high school seniors and adults over the age of 19 in the five counties surrounding Fort Bragg. To better serve the Fort Bragg community, the EOC program has representatives at the Bragg Training and Education Center to offer one-on-one support Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Kervin Hawkins, the Fort Bragg representative, hosted a free seminar Feb. 18 in which he discussed key information about federal financial aid with Soldiers, veterans, and families. The seminar was a time to gather information on the financial aid application process, how eligibility is determined, and the differences among the types of aid.

Hawkins said that a key take away from the seminar, as well as any one-on-one counseling, is how important it is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA. "I hope people take away from today the importance of applying and that they should apply whether they think they are eligible or not," he said. "There are so many types of aid they may be eligible for."

Hawkins emphasized that the FAFSA application is a free application online at <http://fafsa.gov/>. He advised people to be aware of gimmicks or financial aid applications online that charge fees.

Below are some other key financial aid tips Hawkins covered in the seminar:

1. Apply for a pin with the department of education at www.pin.ed.gov . This is what you will use to electronically sign your FAFSA.
2. Complete a FAFSA each year, after Jan. 1. It is advisable to complete your taxes for the year before doing a FAFSA.
3. Some states allow FAFSA applicants to enter their state and use the FAFSA to determine eligibility for State Aid (in addition to Federal Aid).
4. Follow up with the financial aid office at your college or log in at the FAFSA web site to obtain your Student Aid Report (SAR). Carefully review the report and seek support with questions you have. The EOC program can help you review your SAR.

EOC on Fort Bragg is open to anyone who is a high school senior or over the age of 19!

Office Location

Bragg Training and Education Center

Wing E, Room 113

Monday, Wednesday, Friday

8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

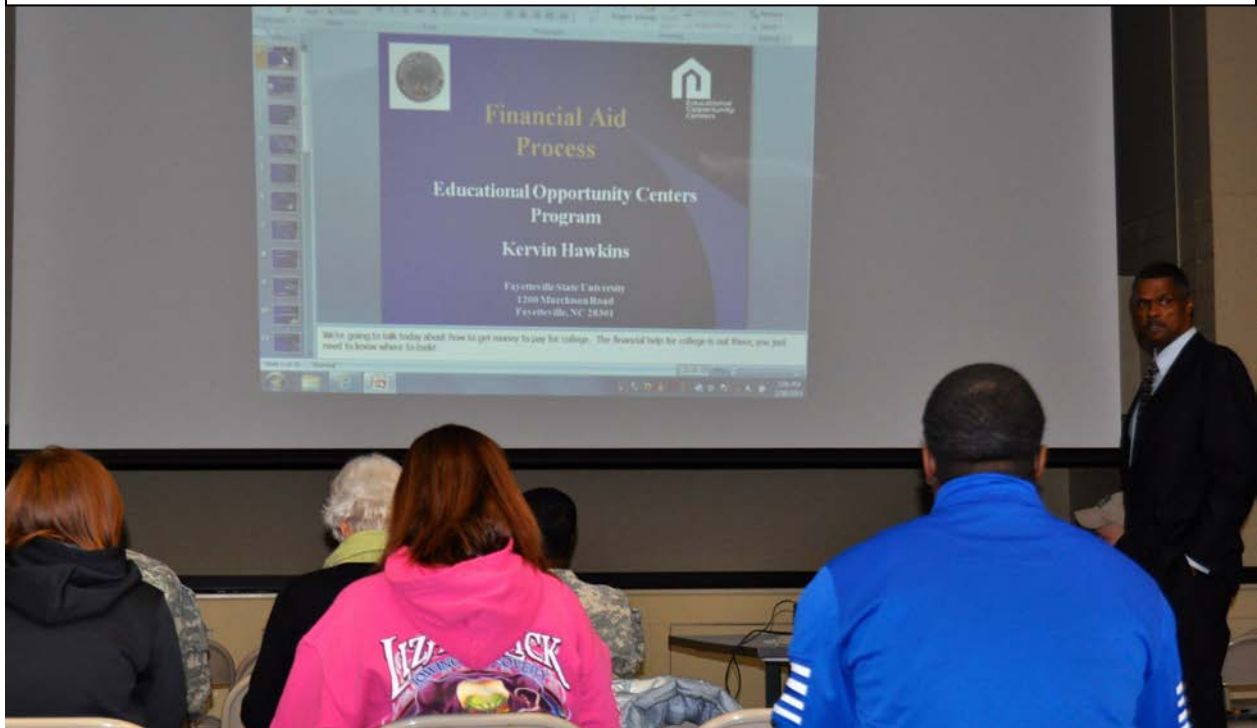
910-672-1171

5. Earn passing grades when in college and using federal aid.
6. Consider private scholarships with large corporations if you do not qualify for Federal or State Aid.
7. Basic “aid” categories are as follows: Grants and scholarships do not need to be paid back. Loans do need to be paid back, with interest. Federal loans tend to have lower interest rates than private loans.
8. FAFSA is used to determine Federal and in some cases State Aid, which are different than Army Tuition Assistance and the two types of GI Bill. Soldiers using TA or GI Bill, and dependents and veterans using GI Bill may still complete a FAFSA.

Anyone in the community who would like to learn more about Federal Financial Aid can call or walk in to work with an EOC representative on Fort Bragg. Further, Soldiers with questions about Army TA can seek support and educational guidance with an Army Education Counselor in the J Wing of the BTEC or call 910-396-6721. Family members and veterans with college questions or GI Bill questions can also seek support in the J Wing.

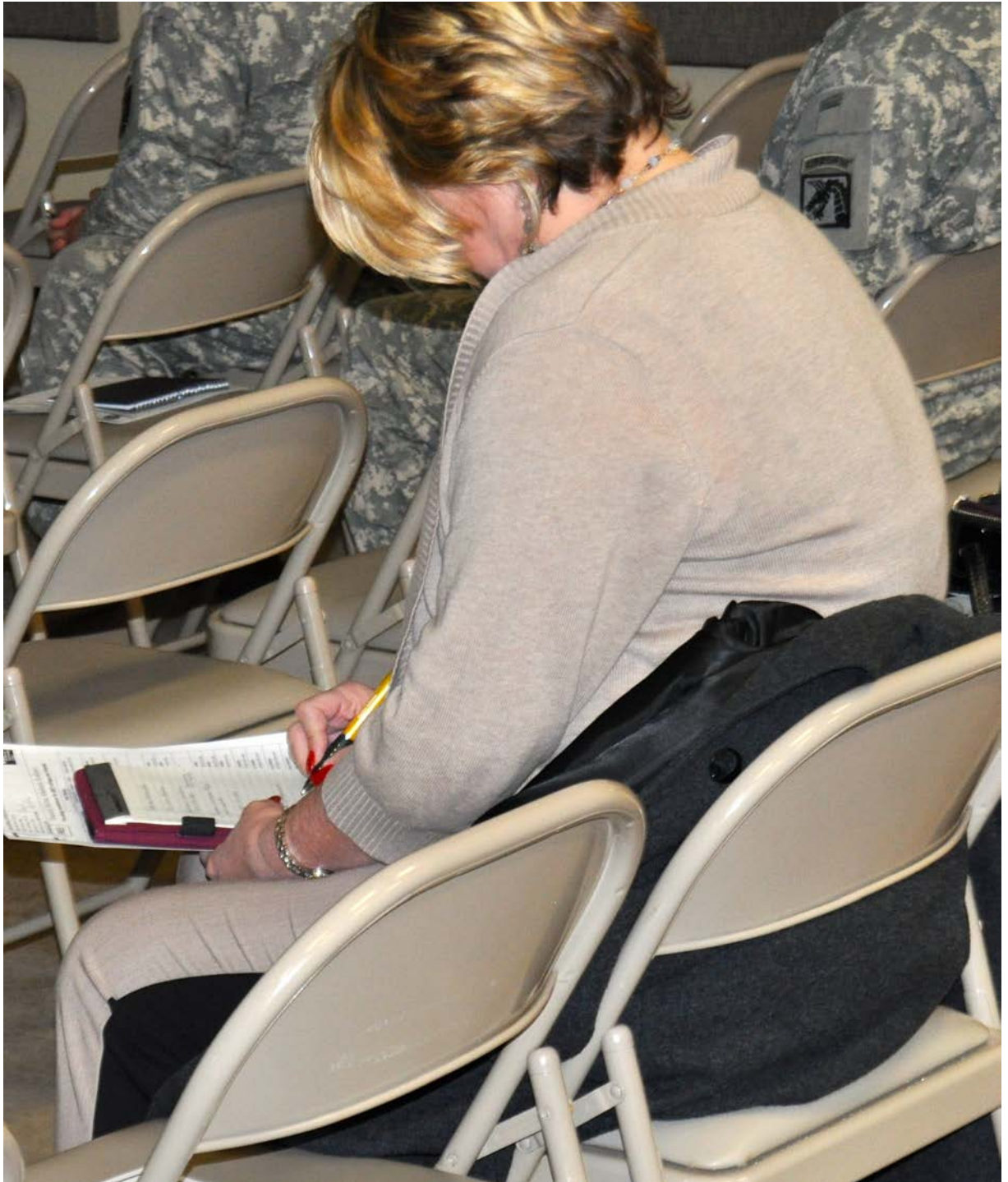
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Mr. Kervin Hawkins, a Fort Bragg representative with the Educational Opportunity Centers program, discussed federal financial aid Feb. 18 at the Bragg Training and Education Center. The EOC offers one-on-one support on Fort Bragg Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the BTEC, Wing e, room 113. They can be reached at 910-672-1171.









Community members take notes as they listen to information at a federal financial aid seminar Feb. 18 at the Bragg Training and Education Center. The Educational Opportunity Centers program offers one-on-one support on Fort Bragg Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the BTEC, Wing e, room 113. They can be reached at 910-672-1171.